

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the final Office Action mailed on November 26, 2003. Claims 1-15 are pending, claims 1, 6 and 14 have been cancelled, claims 2, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 13 have been amended, and claims 16-25 are new. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7-12 and 15. In view of the foregoing amendments, as well as the following remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in complete condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the application in this regard.

Claims 1-6 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,549,288, issued to Migdal et al. ("Migdal"). Of these claims, claims 1, 6 and 14 have been cancelled. Applicants have rewritten dependent claim 7, considered by the Examiner to contain allowable subject matter, in independent form by incorporating all limitations of now-cancelled independent claim 1 and now-cancelled intervening claim 6. Applicants have also amended claims 2 and 5 to depend from independent claim 7. As a result, claims 3 and 4 now depend indirectly from independent claim 7. For at least these reasons, Applicants submit that independent claim 7, and claims 2-5 depending therefrom, are patentable.

Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Migdal in light of knowledge of one of ordinary skill in the art. Claim 13 has been amended to depend from independent claim 7. Applicants submit that claim 13 is patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 7 from which it depends.

The Examiner has acknowledged that claims 9 and 10 are directed to allowable subject matter. Applicants have rewritten these claims in independent form to incorporate the limitations of now-cancelled independent claim 1.

Claims 16-25 have been submitted as new claims in which the combinations of recited elements are neither disclosed nor suggested by the art of record. Claims 16-20 depend from independent claim 9, which the Examiner considered to contain allowable subject matter, and therefore are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 9. Claims 21-25 depend from independent claim 10, which the Examiner considered to contain allowable subject matter, and therefore are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 10.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made a bona fide effort to respond to each and every requirement set forth in the Office Action. In the event that any issues remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to expedite issuance of this application.

Applicants do not believe fees are due in connection with filing this communication other than the excess claim fee. If, however, additional fees are necessary as a result of this communication, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to

charge any under-payment or fees associated with this communication or credit any over-payment to Deposit Account No. 23-3000.

Respectfully submitted,

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